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Solar farm gets 'do not pass' recommendation

*Paddlefish Solar project stymied
by Area Plan Commission ruling*

By JONATHAN SNYDER
The Wells County Area Plan Commission unanimously agreed to send a "do not pass" recommendation to the County Commissioners for the overlay district requested by Paddlefish Solar.

The solar project had requested to overlay 49 parcels of agriculturally zoned land in Liberty Center and Chester townships with a P-1 district for energy development. The issue will now go to the Wells County Commissioners, who can vote to approve or disapprove the request regardless of the APC's ruling. Their next meeting is at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 18.

opposition to the project. APC member Chandler Gerber made the motion for the "do not pass" recommendation, saying that the project appeared to be inconsistent with the Wells County Comprehensive Plan. The motion was passed unanimously by all other board members, Tyson Brooks, Tim Rohr, Board President Jerome Markley, Board Vice President Bill Horan, Jarrod Hahn, Melissa Woodworth, Geoff Lance, John Potter, John Schuhmacher and Executive Director Mike Lautzenheiser.

Paddlefish Solar is jointly owned by EDF Renewables and Geenex Solar. Representing the group Thursday were Regional Project Development Manager for EDF Renewables Jesse Laniak, Project Developer Lana Gabrilyan and Director of Community and Governmental Relations Trena Roudenbush. The group spent the bulk of their time talking about the

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Paddlefish Solar representatives Lana Gabrilyan, Jesse Laniak and Trena Roudenbush presented their request for an Overlay District for solar development in southern Wells County to the Area Plan Commissioner Thursday night. The APC unanimously gave a "do not pass" recommendation to the request. (Photo by Jonathan Snyder)



101 Birthdays

While Velmarose McCormick was getting her hair done for her 101st birthday, she enjoyed cake, punch, and an extra special surprise — Mayor John Whicker declared March 9, 2024, as Velmarose McCormick Day. In his proclamation, Whicker recognized McCormick as a "force for good" as a lifelong resident of Wells County. Above, Whicker presents the proclamation to McCormick alongside McCormick's daughter, Janis Jones. Whicker, McCormick, Jones, and Jones' husband, Howard Jones, are shown at right. (Photos by Holly Gaskill)



Indiana undecided on chronic student absenteeism plan

**By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle**

In the final days of the legislative session, Indiana lawmakers are still trying to address the thousands of Hoosier students who are missing multiple days — even weeks — of school each year.

In negotiations is Senate Bill 282, authored by Sen. Stacey Donato, R-Logansport. The latest draft of the proposal, focused on chronic absenteeism, requires school districts to prohibit habitually truant elementary students — those who have 10 or more unexcused absences — from participating in extracurricular activities.

Under the bill, school officials must additionally report habitually truant students to prosecutors' offices. Prosecutors would then have to notify parents that they've filed affidavits related to their students' absenteeism.

The House and Senate approved different drafts of the bill, but the two chambers now have to agree on a final version.

Donato said the "emphasis" of the bill is for children between the ages of six and 10 "who are absent, excessively, to get what they need to get that education."

How, or if, lawmakers will get the bill across the finish line is still unclear.

"We're working on some

amendments. We are almost there, but at this point ... we're going to continue to do our negotiations," Donato said in a short conference committee on Wednesday.

Indiana's absenteeism problem

State lawmakers were adamant to move bills in the 2024 session to help improve student literacy and bolster career readiness. That included the passage of Senate Bill 1, which will require schools to hold back third graders who do not pass the statewide IREAD test as part of a push to improve reading.

Legislative leaders said, too, that ensuring Hoosier kids actually show up to class is part of their priority agenda.

The latest Indiana data shows that about 40% of students statewide missed 10 or more school days last year, and nearly one in five were "chronically absent" for at least 18 days.

Student absences have been on the rise since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indiana and across the nation. Although Indiana's latest numbers show slight improvements, absentee rates during the 2022-23 school year were still 8% higher than before the pandemic.

Educators around the state say the reasons for absences vary, but family challenges some students

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Biden uses State of the Union to contrast with Trump

**By ZEKE MILLER
and SEUNG MIN KIM
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden turned his State of the Union speech Thursday night into an animated argument for a second term as he laced into GOP front-runner Donald Trump for espousing "resentment, revenge and retribution" and jeopardizing freedom at home and abroad.

Over and over, Biden delivered

broadside at "my predecessor" without ever mentioning Trump by name — 13 times in all — raising his voice repeatedly as he tried to quell voter concerns about his age and job performance while sharpening the contrast with his all-but-certain November rival.

It was a far feistier tone from Biden than his prior State of the Union addresses and it was designed to banish doubts about whether the 81-year-old is still up

to the job. For 68 minutes in the House chamber, Biden goaded Republicans over their policies, invited call-and-response banter with fellow Democrats on economic issues, taxes and healthcare and seemed to revel in the fight.

"Freedom and democracy are under attack both at home and overseas at the very same time," Biden said as he appealed for Congress to support Ukraine's efforts to defend itself against Russia's

invasion. "History is watching."

Biden quickly pivoted to the threats at home, referencing the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol by Trump supporters seeking to overturn the 2020 election, and calling for the threat to democracy to be countered.

"My predecessor — and some of you here — seek to bury the truth about Jan. 6 — I will not do that," Biden said. "This is a moment to speak the truth and to

bury the lies. Here's a simple truth. You can't love your country only when you win."

"My lifetime has taught me to embrace freedom and democracy," Biden said. "A future based on the core values that have defined America: honesty, decency, dignity, equality. To respect everyone. To give everyone a fair shot. To give hate no safe harbor. Now some other people my age see a

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Outside

Shows likely today and tonight with wind gusts

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 58	High 49	High 40
Low 43	Low 29	Low 27

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OBITUARIES

Tina K. Purdue, 50

Tina K. Purdue, 50, of Fort Wayne, passed away peacefully Monday afternoon, March 4, 2024, at Stillwater Hospice Home in Fort Wayne, surrounded by family and friends.



She was born Tina Kristine Boots on July 28, 1973, in Bluffton, to Kenneth E. Boots and Patty Jo Boots (Welches). Tina attended Bluffton High School, participated in choir, and was a member of the National Honor Society. She graduated in 1992 and pursued higher education at Ball State University in Muncie. Tina pursued a career in the medical field, making significant contributions in various administrative roles in both Indianapolis and Fort Wayne; her dedication and professionalism earned her the respect and admiration of colleagues and patients alike.

In her free time, Tina enjoyed spending quality time with her family and friends. She enjoyed the company of her pets, especially her latest pug, Bella, who brought her great happiness and comfort.

She is survived by her loving parents, Kenneth (Patty) Boots of Bluffton, cherished son, Hunter D. Purdue, of Waynedale, dear sister, Angela (Jason) Worman of Edmond, Oklahoma, a nephew, Nathan (Courtney) Worman of Bluffton, and a niece, Hannah (Christian) Holcomb of Yukon, Oklahoma.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton.

A Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 9, 2024, at Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton, led by Pastor Brian Beeks of Monticello United Methodist Church. Visitation will also be held on Saturday from 10 a.m. until the Funeral Service at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made towards funeral expenses through the funeral home or EverLoved.com or donations to Stillwater Home Hospice in Fort Wayne, to honor Tina's compassionate spirit and dedication to helping others. Tina's memory will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew and loved her. May she rest in peace.



Donation to the arts

First Bank of Berne recently made a \$1,000 donation to Creative Arts. Pictured left to right, Erica Bennett, FBB Bluffton branch manager and Janiece Lipsey, executive director at Creative Arts. (Photo provided)

Police Notebook

INCIDENTS

County:

Wednesday, 1:42 p.m., South 300 West and West 1200 South, Keystone. Driver warned for speeding and expired plates, vehicle not registered to driver. Vehicle impounded.

Wednesday, 5:42 p.m., 400 block of Cedar Road, Bluffton. Protective order served to Bobbi Wright.

Wednesday, 6:35 p.m., North 100 East and South Adams Street, Bluffton. Driver cited for speeding 76 in a 55 mph zone.

Thursday, 6:36 a.m., Wells County Jail. Warrant served to Joel Newman.

Ossian:
Wednesday, 3:11 p.m., S.R. 1 and East 500 North, Ossian. Driver pulled over for speeding after initially

failing to stop. Subject charged with operating without receiving license and traveling at an unreasonable rate of speed (89 mph).

Thursday, 12:36 a.m., Silo Farms. Car alarm set off by tow company coming to repossess vehicle.

ARRESTS
Ramon Ignacio Rincon-Vasquez, 35, Fort Wayne,

resisting law enforcement using vehicle, a Class A misdemeanor, reckless driving and operating without ever obtaining license, both Class C misdemeanors. Bond set at \$2,500.

Joel Campbell Newman, 35, Poneto, unlawful carrying of a handgun, a Class A misdemeanor. Bond set at \$1,500.

Ossian Rotary will host blood drive

Ossian Rotary is teaming up with the American Red Cross and First Baptist Church of Ossian to host another blood drive event on March 11 from 1-6 p.m. at the church, 1001 Dehner Drive on Ossian's north side.

Donors at previous blood drives report feeling great about helping others, and are a vital step in saving lives. Pre-scheduled appointments are highly encouraged to allow your donation time to better match your availability. To make an appointment or to learn more, download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App or visit RedCrossBlood.org and search sponsor code OSSIAN. You may also call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Completion of a RapidPass® online health history questionnaire is encouraged to help speed up the donation process. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in.

According to Ossian Rotary President Jeremy Penrod, "Ossian Rotary strives to help those in need in our community. What better way to do that than taking a few minutes to give blood? Please help our blood drive be successful."

Ossian Rotary is a small part of a larger organization, Rotary International, which was founded over 110 years ago in Chicago. Ossian Rotary is a group of people with a desire to meet new people, network, get involved and make a difference in Ossian and other communities. Each week features a different speaker, who helps attendees stay informed on topics that are relevant to our community. Anyone is welcome to donate and help those in need. Please contact Carol Keplar, Ossian Rotary Blood Drive Chair, at rotary-carolk@gmail.com for more information, or call 260-402-8252.

Obituary Policy

The News-Banner and Ossian Journal publishes "basic" obituaries free of charge for "local" deaths. "Basic" obituaries will include the deceased's name, age, community of record, date and place of death, basic genealogical information, the date, time and location of calling hours and services and the name of the funeral home handling arrangements.

If additional information and/or a photo is desired to be included, or if the deceased does not meet the definitions of a "local" person, there is a charge.

Area funeral homes will provide details on the policy and will coordinate obituary publication.

Corrections and clarifications

Coach and teacher Kyle Penrod spoke during Southern Well's work session about a new gym, not Athletic Director Todd Thieme, as stated in the article on March 7.

Lawmakers revive restaurant carry-out alcohol in finalized legislation

By LESLIE BONILLA MUÑIZ
Indiana Capital Chronicle

Expect to see happy hours and the option to add a cocktail to your carry-out restaurant order as soon as July, under finalized legislation approved Thursday. It now goes to the governor.

House and Senate Hoosier lawmakers were briefly at odds over the prospect of legalizing take-out alcohol — which comes in regulated-to-go beverage containers — but settled their differences in a final draft both chambers overwhelmingly approved.

The bill now goes to Gov. Eric Holcomb.

Restaurants and craft

manufacturers say House Bill 1086 would enable them to boost traffic during off-peak hours and cater to increasingly common consumer preferences. Opponents cautioned against an alcohol expansion, noting potential impacts on substance use disorder.

The House legislation originally included both provisions, but even members of that chamber had concerns about how the tamper-evident to-go bags, dubbed "qualified containers," would work.

A Senate committee later ditched the language.

When the House disentangled from those changes, lawmakers of both cham-

bers headed to conference committee to negotiate a final version — which closely resembles earlier drafts.

The bill legalizes happy hours — currently, retailers must hold all-day promotions — and requires that retailers get liquor liability insurance worth at least \$500,000 to obtain or renew a permit after July 1.

It revives the carry-out drink provision, but with a stipulation that the qualified containers restaurants use must be new.

Conference Committee Chair Jake Teshka, R-North Liberty, said he made the change so customers can't bring containers back to be

refilled.

And it maintains bans on retailer-hosted games that are determined by the quantity of alcohol competitors consume and on drinks as prizes — except, as added in conference committee — for drinks won in charity gambling or sold in charity auctions.

Teshka said that edit would avoid a conflict with charity-related alcoholic beverages allowances already on the books.

The House approved the finalized bill on an 80-12 vote, and the Senate on a 39-9 vote. Most votes in opposition came from Republicans breaking with their caucuses.

Emergency powers change clears General Assembly — moves to governor

By CASEY SMITH
Indiana Capital Chronicle

A law limiting the emergency powers of the governor heads to Gov. Eric Holcomb's desk after a Thursday vote. Senators passed Senate Bill 234 on a 40-8 concurrence vote, mostly along party lines.

Under the proposal, an Indiana governor may only declare an emergency for 60 days before the General Assembly must intervene. With their approval, the governor can file a 60-day extension.

The language only impacts statewide emergencies.

The bill now goes to Gov. Eric Holcomb, who said he will sign it.

"When SB 234 reaches my desk, I intend to sign it. A big thank you is owed to the authors of the bill and the leadership in the

General Assembly for the thoughtful collaboration to achieve the proper guardrails during a statewide emergency while still preserving critical flexibility and authority to react to the unforeseen."

Currently the state's leader can only authorize an emergency declaration for 30 days but has endless renewals — a power Holcomb exercised during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Authors cited that repeated emergency declaration as the impetus of the bill. During COVID-19, lawmakers convened multiple times without taking actions to limit Holcomb's emergency powers.

Holcomb is term limited and a slew of Republican candidates have tossed their hat in the ring to succeed him. The win-

ner of the May primary will likely be the next state governor and at least one candidate has voiced full-throated support for the measure: Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch.

"... For our government to serve the people best, we need a balance of power. I am committed to working with legislators to ensure that Hoosiers always have a say in matters that directly impact their families and businesses, especially in a prolonged emergency situation," Crouch said in a campaign newsletter this week.

Crouch and her competitors were similarly supportive of the Senate version, which would have limited the office to an initial 30-day declaration followed by one renewal — but only for federal funding purposes.

VISITATION & SERVICES

Tina K. Purdue

Calling: 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturday, March 9.

Service: 12:30 p.m. Saturday, March 9 at the funeral home.

Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home
308 W. Washington St.
824-3850
www.thomarich.com

Bruce D. Klefeker

Graveside Service: 11 a.m. Saturday, March 9 at Grove Cemetery.

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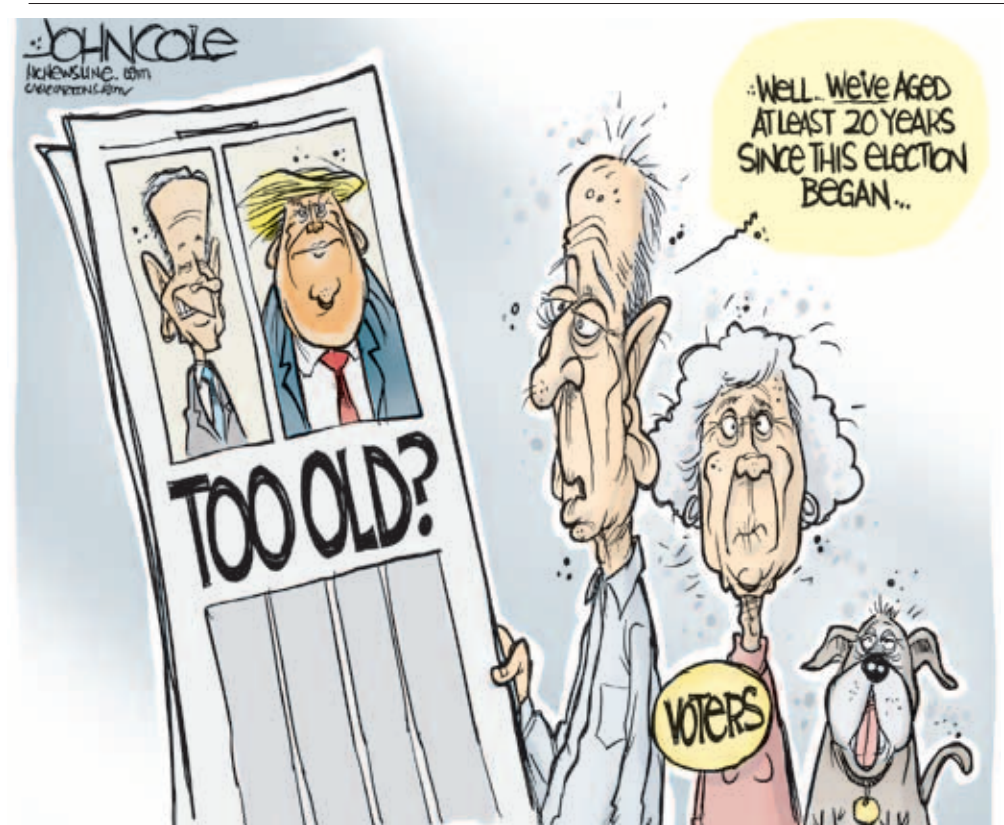
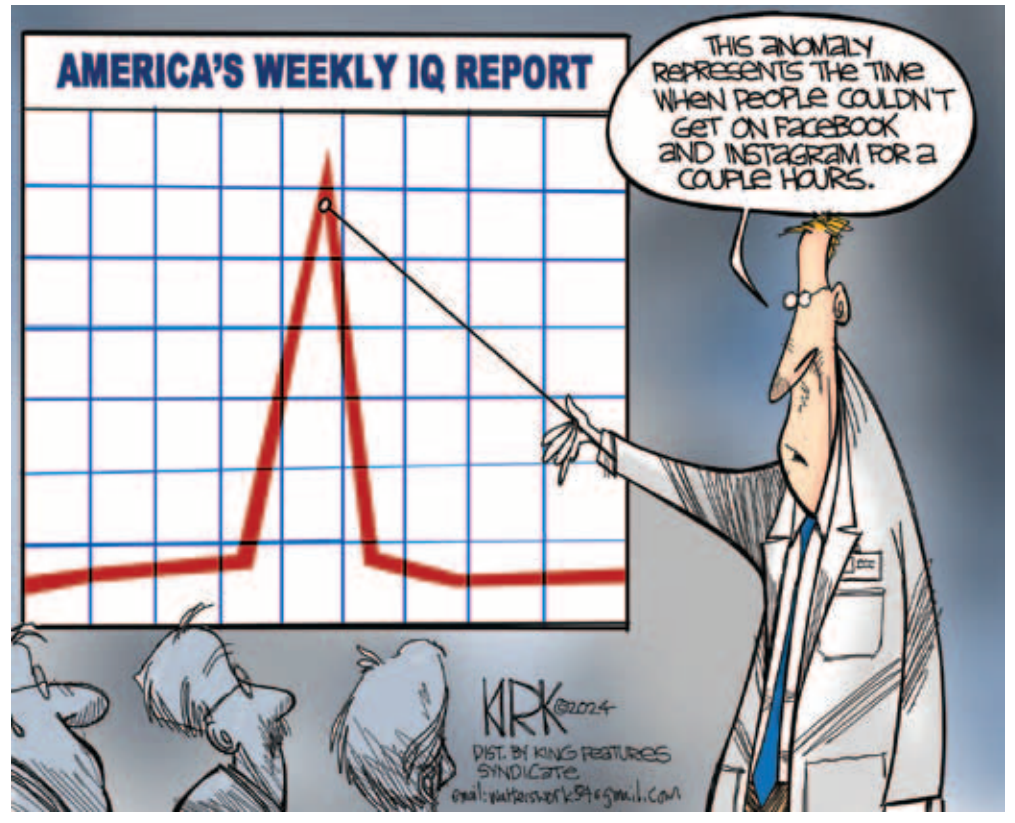
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The Week That Was - a look back through cartoonists' eyes...



Other Opinions

Feeding the U.S. war machine

The United States' military has a habit. It is in constant need of a fix. And it has repeatedly shown that it will say or do anything, without any shame or qualms, to satisfy its craving. The U.S. already has the most powerful military, yet the U.S. top brass are constantly hyping up external threats to try and get more money for their buzz-giver of choice.

This time, it is Stephen Whiting, head of the U.S. Space Command, who has sounded the alarm over what he perceives as China's rapid advancement in space technology, warning of the potential threats he alleges it poses to U.S. interests in outer space.

Speaking before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday, Whiting set off a siren about China's "breathhtaking" progress in military space technology and counterspace capabilities, which he claimed are aimed at denying the U.S. and its allies access to space assets when necessary. By 2030, he cautioned lawmakers, China will have reached "world-class status in all but a few space technology areas".

Whiting didn't bother to hide the addiction motivating such scaremongering, claiming there was "an urgency for our Command to advocate for delivery of new space capabilities and capacity to retain an enduring competitive advantage" in the space domain.

His playing up of a military threat from China was echoed at the same event by Anthony Cotton, head of the U.S. Strategic Command. The purpose of their hustling, as was evident, was to get cash, and lots of it, in order to modernize the U.S. nuclear triad capabilities, that is its ability to strike from the land, sea and air, a mammoth project expected to ultimately cost \$1.5 trillion over the next 30 years. Their unfounded scaremongering was a textbook U.S. military hustle that played to the gallery of their sponsors' bias. Their pantomime portrayal of China as the villain of their story is risible because contrary to their money-tapping tall tales, no country has posed a more serious threat to other countries' security in space than the U.S.

The country has in recent years taken significant actions — such as establishing the U.S. Space Force as a new military wing and setting up the U.S. Space Command as a unified combatant command — to accelerate its militarization of space. It is also actively deploying offensive weapons in space and conducting military exercises and technical experiments there. Such moves undermine world peace and stability and risk triggering an arms race in space.

Belying their budget-badgering scare stories, China has advocated the peaceful use of space and opposed a space arms race. It has called on countries to work together to build a community of shared future in space and to carry out in-depth exchanges and cooperation for the mutually beneficial utilization of outer space. It has actively promoted talks on an arms-control treaty on outer space, and cosponsored related United Nations General Assembly resolutions such as No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. Facts show that China has remained a stabilizing force, rather than a threat as claimed by the U.S., and it is the leading advocate for cooperative space utilization and exploration for the common security and well-being of humankind.

The U.S. should abandon its Cold War mentality, follow the trend of the times, and join China and other countries in the efforts to preserve space as a global commons, where all countries share broad common interests. Space should be an exciting new frontier for cooperation rather than a battlefield for falsely fear-fueled confrontation.

THE CHINA DAILY

With Colorado ruling, the court displays an 'originalism of convenience'

So much for originalism. We've seen this phenomenon from this conservative, supposedly originalist court before. But Monday's ruling in *Trump v. Anderson* underscores the undeniable reality: the court practices an originalism of convenience. When push comes to shove, when a strict originalist approach would yield an undesirable outcome, professed fealty to originalism gives way to practical considerations.

Some might call this results-oriented reasoning hypocritical. In this instance — I agree with the bottom line — I'll go with a welcome display of intellectual flexibility and common sense. In my view, the court was correct to consider the practical fallout of letting Colorado remove former president Donald Trump from its primary ballot, as all nine justices agreed should not be allowed. Maybe we're all living constitutionalists now.

Listen to the conservative justices discussing the dangerous consequences of letting individual states decide for themselves whether candidates for president should be allowed on the ballot.

"An evolving electoral map could dramatically change the behavior of voters, parties, and States across the country, in different ways and at different times," the opinion observes. "The disruption would be all the more acute — and could nullify the votes of millions and change the election result — if Section 3 enforcement were attempted after the Nation has voted. Nothing in the Constitution requires that we endure such chaos — arriving at any time or different times, up to and perhaps beyond the Inauguration."

That sounds, to me, responsibly practical. But these same justices have a track record of declaring their opposition to logic like this.

"Suppose originalism *does* lead to a result you happen to dislike in this or that case. So what?" Justice Neil M. Gorsuch wrote in his book on originalism. And more: "The fact is, a good originalist judge will not hesitate to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution's original meaning, regardless of contemporary political consequences." Oh really?

Justice Clarence Thomas purports to be similarly self-abnegating.



Ruth Marcus

"There are really only two ways to interpret the Constitution: try to discern as best we can what the framers intended or make it up," he said in a 2008 lecture. "No matter how ingenious, imaginative or artfully put, unless interpretive methodologies are tied to the original intent of the framers, they have no more basis in the Constitution than the latest football scores."

You might think that self-proclaimed originalists would have spent a bit more time grappling with the constitutional text. After all, an influential law review article by two leading originalist scholars argued that Section 3 required Trump's disqualification. It received not a mention.

Another chance to pursue an originalist line of thought: Scholars, and the lower courts, disagreed about

3's final sentence: "But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability."

As the concurring (but actually dissenting on this point) liberal justices observed, "In fact, the text cuts the opposite way. ... It is hard to understand why the Constitution would require a congressional supermajority to remove a disqualification if a simple majority could nullify Section 3's operation by repealing or declining to pass implementing legislation." Trump's own lawyer, they noted, acknowledged this "tension" at oral argument.

Meanwhile, the court's paeans to the rights of voters and its worry about state-by-state patchworks don't track with the Constitution's provisions assigning state legislatures the authority to determine how to choose presidential electors. Back in the day (1868, when the 14th Amendment was ratified), primary elections didn't exist, state legislatures chose senators and presidential electors were still legally free to cast votes however they wanted. So protecting popular sovereignty isn't exactly ... originalist.

You know who understands that the originalist justices lost their way here? Actual originalists, who are beside themselves. "The Originalist Disaster in *Trump v. Anderson*," Michael Rappaport, director of the Center for the Study of Constitutional Originalism at the University of San Diego School of Law, headlined a blog post.

"It is understandable that the Supreme Court would have decided the case on this nonoriginalist basis," Rappaport wrote. "It does not want to wade into the question of whether Trump engaged in an insurrection. The Republic will not fall because the Court engaged in an unprincipled, pragmatic resolution where its self-interest was severely implicated. But let's not kid ourselves that this was originalism. It was not."

And let's not kid ourselves about what's going on here. Originalism is a method rigged to produce a result — no abortion rights, easy access to guns — that is congenial to conservatives' ideological preferences. On the occasions when it's not, they cherry-pick history or, as here, abandon the approach, with nary an acknowledgment. Hypocrisy in the service of a sensible outcome may not be the worst vice, but it shouldn't go unremarked.

ruthmarcus@washpost.com.



Uvalde parents angered by new report that clears police of missteps

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — An investigation Uvalde city leaders ordered into the Robb Elementary School shooting that killed 19 students and two teachers defended the response by local police at a City Council meeting Thursday, prompting shouts of “cowards” from the audience and causing several family members of the victims to angrily walk out of the meeting.

The report acknowledged wide failures by police during the 2022 attack and reiterated rippling missteps that the Justice Department and state lawmakers have previously laid bare. Nearly 400 law enforcement agents, including Uvalde Police Department officers, rushed to the scene of the shooting but waited more than an hour to confront a teenage gunman armed with an AR-style rifle.

But an investigator hired by Uvalde officials found that the city’s officers did not deserve punishment, and in some cases, praised their actions during one of the deadliest classroom shootings in U.S. history. The presentation prompted an eruption of anger among

some of the victims’ family members, who also scolded the investigator for leaving the room before they had a chance to address him.

“You said they did it in good faith. You call that good faith? They stood there 77 minutes,” said Kimberly Mata-Rubio, whose daughter was among those killed in the attack, after the presentation ended.

Jesse Prado, an Austin-based investigator and former police detective who made the report for the Uvalde City Council, began his presentation by describing the failures by responding local, state and federal officers at the scene that day: communication problems, poor training for live shooter situations, lack of available equipment and delays on breaching the classroom.

“There were problems all day long with communication and lack of it. The officers had no way of knowing what was being planned, what was being said,” Prado said. “If they would have had a ballistic shield, it would have been enough to get them to the door.”

The city’s report is just one of several probes into

the massacre, including the Justice Department report in January that criticized the “cascading failures” of responding law enforcement.

Law enforcement took more than an hour to get inside the classroom and kill the gunman, even as children inside the classrooms called 911, begging police to rescue them.

But Prado said his review showed that officers showed “immeasurable strength” and “level-headed thinking” as they faced fire from the shooter and refrained from shooting into a darkened classroom.

“They were being shot at from eight feet away from the door,” Prado said.

Prado also said the families who rushed to the school hampered efforts to set up a chain of command as they had to conduct control with parents trying to get in the building or pleading with officers to go inside.

“At times they were difficult to control,” Prado said. “They were wanting to break through police barriers.”

Family members erupted when Prado briefly left after

his presentation.

“Bring him back!” several of them shouted.

Prado returned and sat and listened when victims’ families cried and criticized the report, the council and the responding officers.

“My daughter was left for dead,” Ruben Zamorra said. “These police officers signed up to do a job. They didn’t do it.”

A criminal investigation by Uvalde District Attorney Christina Mitchell’s office into the law enforcement response in the May 2022 shooting remains open. A grand jury was summoned earlier this year and some law enforcement officials have already been asked to testify.

Tensions remain high between Uvalde city officials and the local prosecutor, while the community of more than 15,000, about 85 miles southwest of San Antonio, is plagued with trauma and divided over accountability.

Uvalde City Council

member Hector Luevano said he was “embarrassed” and “insulted” by the city’s report.

“These families deserve more. This community deserves more,” Luevano said. “I don’t accept this report.”

The city report comes after a nearly 600-page report by the Department of Justice in January found massive failures by law enforcement, including acting with “no urgency” to establish a command post, assuming the subject was barricaded despite ongoing gunfire, and communicating inaccurate information to grieving families.

“Had law enforcement agencies followed generally accepted practices in active shooter situations and gone right after the shooter and stopped him, lives would have been saved and people would have survived,” U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said when the federal report was released.

The DOJ reported that

48 minutes after the shooter entered the school, UPD Acting Chief Mariano Pargas “continued to provide no direction, command or control to personnel.”

The city report notes the agency’s SWAT team had not trained consistently since before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Three UPD officers who were present in the hallway during the shooting “were the leadership of the SWAT team and had the most experience with Uvalde PD.”

Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott initially praised the law enforcement response, saying the reason the shooting was “not worse is because law enforcement officials did what they do.” He claimed that officers had run toward gunfire to save lives.

But in the weeks following the shooting, that story changed as information released through media reports and lawmakers’ findings illustrated the botched law enforcement response.

A Talk with Tego



Rugar is a three-year-old, Texas Heeler, neutered male. He will do best in an only dog home.



Carter is a two-year-old, tabby, neutered male.



Cash is a two-year-old, tiger striped, neutered male.



Tego

Tego’s Tips: Some dogs don’t out grow blanket, bed or toy sucking.

These are just a few pets available for adoption at the Wells County Animal Shelter, 1613 W. Cherry St., Bluffton. For more information call 824-6063.

**2024-2025
KINDERGARTEN
REGISTRATION**

**BLUFFTON-HARRISON
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1:00PM - 6:30PM

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

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BHMSD WELCOMES INCOMING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES FROM ALL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

ALL STUDENTS AGE 5 BY AUGUST 1, 2024, ARE ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND KINDERGARTEN IN THE FALL.

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SELECT
SCREENING DATES

PRE-REGISTER
FOR KINDERGARTEN



MEET THE
ADMINISTRATORS

ASK
QUESTIONS

JOIN THE BHMSD FAMILY!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.BHMSD.ORG
OFFICE: (260) 824-0333

We believe LOCAL AGRICULTURE EXPERTS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

- AG OPERATING LINE OF CREDIT
- LIVESTOCK LENDING
- INVENTORY LOANS
- CROP INSURANCE
- CONSTRUCTION & EQUIPMENT LOANS
- FARM FINANCIAL CONSULTING
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2023 TOP AGRICULTURE LENDERS

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TOP 100 FARM LENDERS 2023

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